

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 SSO-00 /023 W
-----310925Z 085758 /22R

P 310608Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2966

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY

FOR SECRETARY VANCE FROM AMBASSADOR SELDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, NZ
SUBJECT: PLEA FOR AN EARLY VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY PRIME
MINISTER ROBERT DAVID MULDOON

REF: WELLINGTON 0925

1. PLEASE PERMIT ME TO BRING TO YOUR PERSONAL
ATTENTION MY SERIOUS CONCERN ON LEARNING TODAY THAT
PRIME MINISTER FRASER OF AUSTRALIA IS TO SEE PRESIDENT
CARTER IN JUNE WHILE PRIME MINISTER MULDOON WILL
NOT BE SCHEDULED UNTIL AN INDEFINITE
TIME IN THE SECOND HALF OF THIS YEAR. WHILE I CANNOT
GIVE YOU THE PRIME MINISTER'S
REACTION SINCE HE IS PRESENTLY IN LONDON, THOSE
CLOSEST TO HIM IN NEW ZEALAND ARE DISMAYED AND
FRUSTRATED AT THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN ARRANGING FOR
THE PRIME MINISTER'S WASHINGTON VISIT.

2. NEW ZEALAND PRESS THIS EVENING ARE FRONT-PAGING
THIS FRUSTRATION WITH ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OUT OF
WASHINGTON (LIKELY NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY) THAT NEW
ZEALAND GETTING THE "RUN AROUND" FROM WHITE HOUSE
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STAFFERS AND DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OVER PLANNED
JUNE VISITS FOR AUSTRALIAN PM FRASER BUT NOT FOR
MULDOON. PRESS REPORT QUOTES GNZ OFFICIAL IN
WASHINGTON AS SAYING: QUOTE NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN GIVEN EQUAL TREATMENT ON THINGS LIKE THIS IN
THE PAST BUT NOW THE WHITE HOUSE CAN'T EVEN COME UP WITH
PROPOSED DATES FOR MR. MULDOON'S VISIT THAT WE CAN

TALK ABOUT. UNQUOTE.

3. ONE OF THE FACTORS AT WORK, AS YOU ARE AWARE, MR. SECRETARY, IS THE LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP EXISTING BETWEEN CANBERRA AND WELLINGTON WITH NEW ZEALAND AS THE SMALLER COUNTRY FEELING SOMETIMES PERHAPS OVERLY SENSITIVE TO THE APPEARANCE OF BEING SUBSUMED IN A LARGER AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY. THIS DEFENSIVE NEW ZEALAND SENSITIVITY ABOUT AUSTRALIA HAS NOW BEEN AGGRAVATED BY THE REALIZATION THAT AUSTRALIA HAS STEPPED TO THE HEAD OF THE LINE WHEN MULDOON THOUGHT NEW ZEALAND WOULD COME BEFORE, OR AT LEAST AT THE SAME TIME AS AUSTRALIA. WHEN FRASER WAS SEEING PRESIDENT FORD LAST YEAR, MULDOON AGREED TO WAIT AND SEE THE PRESIDENT IN THE ARLY SPRING OF 1977. WHEN THIS WAS RULED OUT SEVERAL WEEKS AGO HE WAS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION BY HIS EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT BOTH HE AND FRASER WOULD SEE PRESIDENT CARTER IN JUNE AND HE SO ANNOUNCED IN THE PRESS. CONSEQUENTLY, PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT HAS APPENED WILL CAUSE MULDOON'S HUMILIATION TO BE GREAT. HIS SUPPORTERS ARE ALREADY DOWNCAST, WHILE HIS OPPONENTS, SOME OF WHOM ARE QUOTE ILL-DISPOSED TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES, WILL SURELY BE GLEEFUL. THE PUBLIC GIBES AGAINST MULDOON, WHOSE POLITICAL IMAGE AND, INDEED, WHOSE DEEPEST INNER CONVICTIONS, ARE BUILT ON STALWART FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES, ARE CERTAIN TO BE NASTY.

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4. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OPEN PUBLIC ADMIRATION FOR THE UNITED STATES, AND HIS ACTIONS SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN NOVEMBER 1975 TO STRENGTHEN AND REFURBISH NEW ZEALAND-AMERICAN RELATIONS, THIS LACK OF PROGRESS AT ARRANGING FOR HIS VISIT IS DIFFICULT FOR NEW ZEALANDERS TO UNDERSTAND. FIRST AND FOREMOST WAS MULDOON'S LEAD IN THE RESUMPTION OF VISITS TO NEW ZEALAND BY AMERICAN NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS (NPWS), WHICH HAD BEEN BARRED SINCE 1964. AS YOU KNOW, MR. SECRETARY, TWO NPWS, THE USS TRUXTUN AND THE USS LONG BEACH, DID VISIT NEW ZEALAND IN 1976, AS MULDOON HAD ASSURED AND IN SPITE OF CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC OUTCRY. THE RESULT HAS BEEN AN UNDOUBTED STRENGTHENING OF OUR ANZUS ALLIANCE WITH NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA. IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND THAT IT WAS MULDOON, NOT FRASER, WHO TOOK THE INITIATIVE IN LIFTING THIS LONG-TIME BAN ON NPWS.

5. MOREOVER, IT WAS MULDOON WHO TOOK THE LEAD IN

DISAVOWING, ALONG WITH AUSTRALIA AND THE NEIGHBORING PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS, THE SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE WHICH HAD BEEN SPONSORED IN THE UNITED NATIONS BY THE FORMER NZ LABOUR GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER ELUSIVE IN CONCEPT, THE SPNWFZ BORE ADVERSELY ON NAVIGATION OF THE HIGH SEAS AND ON THE ANZUS ALLIANCE ITSLEF. MULDOON PERSONALLY ENGINEERED THE DISAVOWAL OF THESE OBJECTIONABLE FEATURES OF THE SPNWFZ BY ALL THE CONERNED NATIONS IN THIS PART OF THE WOUTH PACIFIC.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO SECRETARY.

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 SSO-00 /023 W
-----310923Z 086056 /22R
P 310608Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2967

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 WELLINGTON 1186

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FOR SECRETARY VANCE FROM AMBASSADOR SELDEN

6. FURTHER, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN SEEKING TO CHECK SOVIET AMBITIONS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS BY CONCENTRATING THE BULK OF NEW ZEALAND'S EXTERNAL AID TO THESE NATIONS, AND BY ENCOURAGING THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES TO HELP THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT NATIONS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDED TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF THEIR PEOPLES.

7. MR. SECRETARY, THE PRESIDENT NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT UNDER PRIME MINISTER MULDOON IS AS CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES AS ANY COUNTRY CAN BE. THE PRIME MINISTER IS AN ARDENT ADMIRER OF OURS AND A COURAGEOUS AND SKILLFUL ADVOCATE OF CLOSER NEW ZEALAND-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HE IS BOUND TO FEEL DESOLATE BY BEING PUT OFF IN THIS FASHION. CERTAINLY HE WILL FEEL STILL FURTHER AGGRIVED AT THE FACT THAT FRASER WILL HAVE SEEN THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT TWICE IN

THE PAST YEAR WHILE HE IS STILL WAITING. IN A CONVERSATION LAST YEAR HE TOLD ME HE WOULD NOT IMPOSE UPON THE PRESIDENT IN THE ELECTION YEAR BUT WOULD AWAIT AN INVIAITION IN EARLY 1977. THIS WAS REMAINED HIS STEADFAST HOPE AND PLAN FOR THE PAST NINE MONTHS.

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8. MR. SECRETARY, IS RESPECTFULLY URGE THAT YOU DO EVERYTING YOU CAN TO ARRANGE FOR MULDOON TO SEE PRESIDENT CARTER. IF IT COULD BE ARRANGED FOR MR. MULDOON TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT FOR A COUPLE OFHOURS ON HIS WAY HOME FROM THE COMMONWEALTH MEETING IN LONDON WITH A FULLER, OFFICIAL VISIT TO FOLLOW LATER IN THE YEAR, I WOULD SPECULATE THIS WOULD BE MUCH MORE PREFERABLE THAN NO VISIT AT ALL. WHILE I DO NOT KNOW WHAT MULDOON'S REACTION TO SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD BE IF IT COULD BE ARRANGED, I WOULD THINK IT WOULD DO NO HARM (AND PERHAPS MUCH GOOD) TO EXPLORE IT WITH THE N.Z. EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. TWO HOURS OF THE PRESIDENT'S TIME WOULD LIKELY BE SUFFICIENT FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF U.S.-N.Z. RELATIONS AND CERTAINLY ENOUGH TO PRESERVE PRIME MINISTER MULDOON'S PRESTIGE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.

SELDEN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2931099
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PLEA FOR AN EARLY VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY PRIME MINISTER ROBERT DAVID MULDOON
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, NZ, US, (MULDOON, ROBERT D)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4f8507ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009